

Zen Buddhist Temple

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Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives

Who?

By attending a Zen meditation service at the Zen Buddhist Temple, we were able to explore our fascination with the Buddhist faith and its emphasis on remaining grounded and achieving enlightenment. In Buddhism, human life is considered one of suffering, but through meditation and spiritual labor, an individual can achieve enlightenment. Zen Buddhism highlights an individual achieving enlightenment through the aid of their community, which was highlighted in our experience.



What?

We attended a Zen meditation service for two hours and engaged in all rituals, chants, and offerings.

Why?

To engage with the Buddhist community at this temple, we conducted an interview with worshippers present. Almost every Buddhist in the temple was raised Catholic and chose to convert at some point in their life. The head priest grew up in Poland and discovered Buddhism through books at a time in her life she felt a disconnect from the world. Another priest was drawn to Buddhism because of the suffering he found in his life and the world around him and his search for answers led him to Buddhism out of "good fortune."

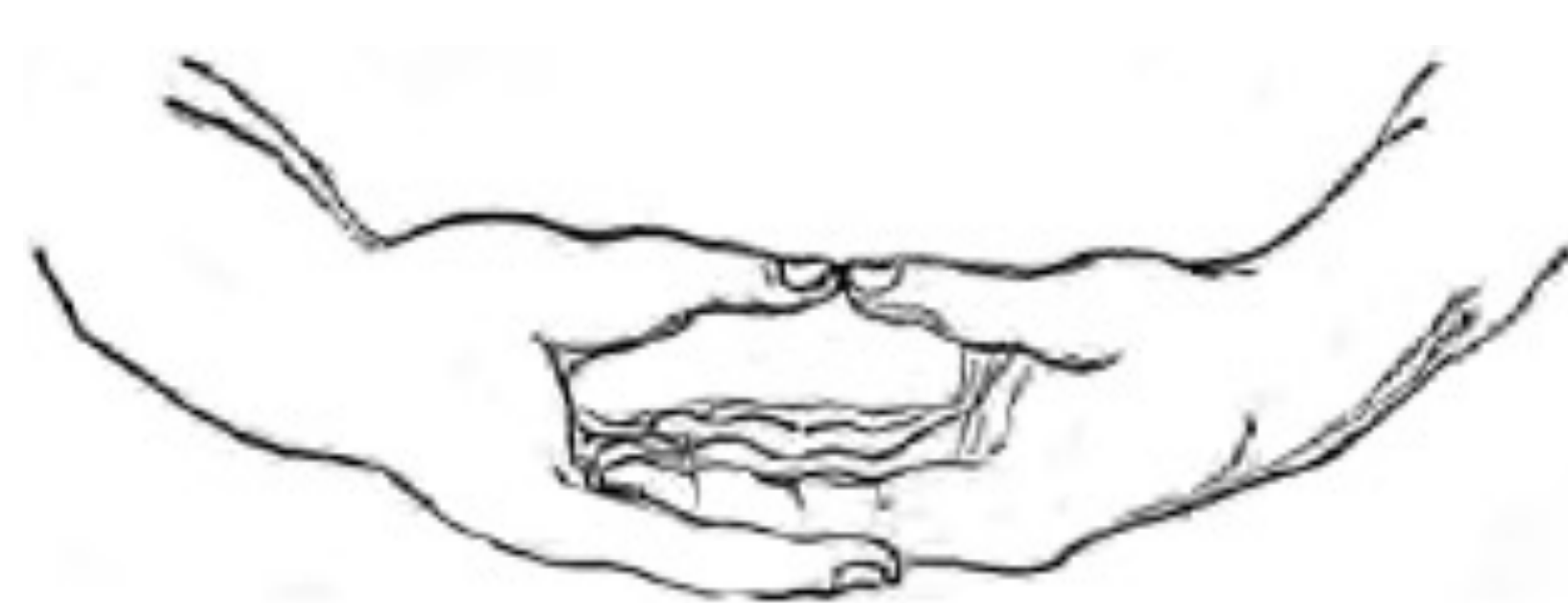
Where?

The Zen Buddhist Temple of Chicago is located at 608 Dempster St. in Evanston.



Zazen

This meditation started with us first bowing to our seats. After bowing, we had to sit in either the lotus position, a cross-legged position, or traditional kneeling. The seats were facing the wall, and we sat in silence for roughly 20 minutes with a singing bowl ringing out intermittently. By doing this, the worshiper is able to clear their mind. The second Zazen had a brief sermon.



O-shōkō

O-shōkō, an incense offering, is a purification ritual. It purifies our thoughts, speech, and action. This offering cleanses the mind and allows us to receive dharma, or the teachings. It is also an act of respect and gratitude to the Buddha. This gratitude can also be given in the form of a donation at this time, but it is not required to participate in the ritual.



Kinhin

- Stand in circle
- Singing bowl is rung
- Everyone walks around slowly, lifting foot from heel & slowly pausing at toe
- While walking, each person holds hand in Shashu position
- Repeat for approximately 15 minutes



Chanting

The Heart Sutra/ The Great Heart of Wisdom Sutra
The Four Great Vows
Great Pranje Paramita Sutra

All chants emphasize connecting with one's emptiness and going beyond the physical.

